

NO – Hello. My name is Norman Olson. I'm a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service employee and a volunteer at the Service's National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Today is Tuesday, October 10th 2006, and it's about two o'clock in the afternoon. My guest is Paul Schmidt and this interview is being conducted during the Fish & Wildlife Service Retirees' Reunion at the MCM Elegant Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Paul is a current Fish & Wildlife Service employee and lives in the Washington, D.C. area. Paul, I wonder if we could begin by having you tell us your full name and please, spell it out for us; when and where you were born and raised; when and where you went to college; the degrees you received; what your current position is with the Service; how you came to first work for the Fish & Wildlife Service; and then, how you wound up in Alaska in 1986.

PS -- Well, thanks Norm, and it's special to be with you today and think about the things that you're asking me. My full name is Paul Rudolph Schmidt – Paul: P A U L; Rudolph: R U D O L P H; Schmidt: S C H M I D T. I was born April 24th 1956, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. I was raised actually across ... moved around quite a bit, so there's no one particular place. I moved from air force base to air force base, starting in St. John's, Newfoundland; to Panama City, Florida; Great Falls, Montana; Suffolk County on Long Island in New York. And, eventually, my father retired, and I finished my high school days in northern Virginia -- actually Arlington, Virginia -- now only about a mile or so from where the Fish & Wildlife Service's headquarter staff are in Arlington, Virginia.

PS -- I went to college at the College of William and Mary in ... in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1974 to 1978. Graduated with a bachelor's degree in ... Bachelor of Science degree in biology, and proceeded to my first position with Fish & Wildlife Service, in 1978, a couple of months after graduation. It was a time when I was trying to make a decision between working and going to graduate school. I actually had been accepted to Duke University for graduate school at that time, but, I got a call, random call you might think, out of ... out of the air. A man by the name of Glen Bond, who was the Refuge Manager for Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, had been given my name as a result of the ... the ... the career entrance exam ... I forgot what they called it way back then ... when federal employment ... you'd take a standardized exam. I had done very well on the exam and ... and put my interest down, but really wasn't sure what I wanted to do. But, I got a call from Glen Bond, sort of out of the blue, and he offered me a job at Back Bay. And [I] took that job in August ... I think it was August 11th or 12th, of 1978. And reported for duty, at that time. I didn't know much about the Fish & Wildlife Service, frankly. I knew just in ... just little bits and pieces. So I was going in, sort of as brand new, fresh, employee. I was hired in as an Outdoor Recreation Planner. I really wasn't even sure what that position was all about. But, [I] needed a job; seemed like a good thing to do. And I came to realize what a great decision that was, in 1978. Maybe we'll explore that somewhere along the line in the interview. But, the other thing is ... you wanted to know how I wound up in Alaska [in] 1986. I was, at that time I was in the Washington Office with the Division of Refuges, and had been recruited by Joe Mezzoni, who was ... at that time was the Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife. And he and John **Doble** collectively ... John **Doble** by the way is ... and he were really close colleagues. And I came to find out later that it was actually a communication between the two of them that stimulated Joe Mezzoni to pursue me. Because I was working for John **Doble** at the time in Washington D.C. He ... then ... and John thought enough of me and ... and gave me a really good recommendation

to Joe. And Joe trusted John. Joe didn't know me from anyone, but Joe hired me ... and ... as the Chief of Resource Support. I came to find out later that ... that Joe was hiring me up to take a look at me in order to determine whether I could ... I would be a good selection for the Refuge Supervisor job. So the Refuge Supervisor job was also about to be open, and he knew that because Delaney ... Bob Delaney, was about to move to some other position, and they wanted somebody in there. But Joe was not willing to, sight unseen on John **Doble**'s recommendation, have me become the Refuge Supervisor. So he wanted to see how I might perform. And so he used ... it turns out in hindsight ... I didn't know this at the time, but in hindsight, that the three months that I spent as a Chief of that ... Resource Support Division, I guess it was, in Alaska, was a sort of a trial period for me. And then Joe proceeded, in three or four months, later, after Bob had transitioned out, to ... to select me as the Refuge Supervisor position there for the southern refuges. Bob Delaney was the Refuge Supervisor there, and John Kurtz was the Refuge Supervisor for the northern refuges. And the ... so they split the state in half, basically, by that. So, that's how I came to come to Alaska, and into the Fish & Wildlife Service.

NO – Who was ... who was in the Directorate in Anchorage at that time?

PS -- At that time, Bob Gilmore was the Regional Director.

NO – Regional director.

PS -- And, it was Dave Olsen who was the

NO – Deputy?

PS -- Deputy ... I believe. John Rogers, John ... John G. ... excuse me, John P. Rogers was the Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife ... Doctor John P. Rogers, who formerly ... easily confused with John G. Rogers. John G. Rogers was later to become the Deputy Regional Director there, and frankly, one of the kind of cute little stories is that, at one point in that time period I was in Alaska, I sat between John G. Rogers and John P. Rogers in an office. And it was confusing for the secretaries' nonethe ... needless to say, when they'd get a call for John Rogers, and they weren't sure which one the person meant. Anyway, I was in the Regional Directors ... those were the ... that was ... the Regional Director was Bob Gilmore. Bob wasn't there probably but about, I'll say six months ... or maybe as much as a year, before ... when I got there, before he was then moved ... he was moved out of that position, ...

NO – Right.

PS -- ... in a very tumultuous time. In fact I can remember the ... the day ... the moment, he got the word from the Director that he was to report to duty in Washington, D.C. That was kind of a tense time.

NO – It was a bit of a 'directed reassignment.'

PS -- It was a bit of a 'directed reassignment.' If you want me [\[to\]](#), I can explore that with ... I can tell you that ... my recollections of that.

NO – Oh, absolutely. ‘Cause I was there, but I was busy doing other things so I don’t ...

PS -- I’d just been ...

NO – ... know all the ...

PS -- There was a ... it was an ominous moment. We ... I was ... as a part of being the Refuge Supervisor, I guess I was a part of the Regional Directorate, who had meetings once a week -- I believe it was Monday, but I could be wrong about that -- it probably was Monday morning -- when we’d go into the office and ... and Bob Gilmore would ... would ... would run the meeting essentially. And ... and the various Assistant Regional Directors and ... and key supervisors would be in ... in the meeting, as well as, occasionally, Mary Smith -- who was the secretary to Bob. Well, Bob was running the meeting, and just started, and I can remember Mary Smith came in to the room and interrupted the meeting. And she said ‘Bob, you have to take a phone call.’ And we had this big oval-shaped table, and Bob was at the end of it. And she said ... he said ‘I ... I’m ... I’m in the middle of a meeting, you know, can we just call them back later?’ She ... and Mary Smith knew the ropes of this job. She said ‘no Bob, you have to take this call, it’s the Director.’ And it was Frank Dunkle, who was the Director at that time. And Bob left the room; took the call. It wouldn’t ... wouldn’t have been five minutes later that Bob returned to the room with a different look on his face, and proceeded to say to us that, effectively immediately, he was no longer the Regional Director, and that ... that the Director Frank Dunkle had sent Jim Gritman, on a plane, that day, and he was in ... halfway to Anchorage as we spoke, and he was effectively the Regional Director at that moment. And Bob assumed another pos... another seat in the room and ... and didn’t conduct the rest of the meeting. It was that ...

NO – I knew it was abrupt, but I didn’t quite realize ...

PS – ... that ... it was that abrupt. He said ‘Jim Gritman is your Regional Director, effectively immediately.’ And [indecipherable] like, you could have heard a pin drop, obviously, in that room. It was ... it was quite ... quite intimidating, I would say, for everybody, to think that somebody ... that would happen to

NO – That way.

PS -- That way. But, that was early on in the career in Alaska.

NO – So you actually weren’t with the Resource Support Group that long.

PS -- Not very long. Not at all ... not very long at all. Before then ... after I left that position, Gail Baker, I believe, became the Chief of Resource Support. But during that time, the staff of the Resource Support ... I’ll probably not get all the names, but ... that was at a time when there was the Resource Support ... and there was a Planning Division -- which you were in Norman ...

NO – Right .

PS -- And then ... but in Resource Support ... we had various experts -- technical experts -- who were joined in ... in one ... one Division, that were ... were resources to the whole

Region, whether it be Field or Regional office. We had cultural resource ... archeologists -- which was Chuck Dieters. We had botanists -- who was Steve Talbot, or Steven Talbot. We had an outdoor ... an education branch, I'll call it, from that ... which was Conrad Gunther,

NO -- That's right.

PS -- ... who was ... who was sort of a ... a branch underneath that division, if you will, who had in his division ... his branch ... I believe Janet Ady was there, at that time. I believe Sue Mathews would have been there at that time. There was ... there were a couple of others there ...

NO -- Patty Gallagher I think might have been there ...

PS -- Patty Gallagher was there ...

NO -- ... graphics [indecipherable] ...

PS -- ... absolutely, she was there, and under Conrad as well. And then we might have had a couple of other ... I think we had one or two wildlife biologists as well, in the ... in the division. And, I'm sorry; I can't remember everybody's name.

NO -- And Dave Patterson I think ...

PS -- Dave Patterson! Thank you! He's a recreation specialist who was in there.

NO -- Bob Semul ...

PS -- Bob Semul ...

NO -- Was a wilderness ...

PS -- Oh my god, Bob Semul ... just adored Bob, and his way he handled things. It was a very ... so I shouldn't have forgotten Bob. But I'm sorry; it's 20 some years ago. My memory's not so good. But Bob was ... and all that whole ... that whole group was incredibly warm to me ... brand new person. I was relatively young. I was probably 30 or something like that. And I ... they ... I came up there, sight unseen, to the staff, and I'm sure they had a bunch ... quite a bit of anxiety and concern about who this young guy was from Washington, D.C., who was coming in there. But, to a person, they were very open and welcoming to me. And, to this day, I ... I ... I appreciate that. And ... and they all had far be ... more expertise in their particular field than I did, and I was ... as you said and as I said, I was only there a few months, but ... became to appreciate their expertise, and it was sort of a team. And it really was a team, because each brought different kinds of skills and expertise to ... to ... to share, if you will, with the ... the rest of the Region.

NO -- We used them quite often in our planning ...

PS -- Of course. Yeah.

NO – [Indecipherable] Comprehensive Conservation Plans, they were active players in those so ...

PS -- Oh, you bet.

NO – They were good people, good resource to have access to.

PS – Yeah. Because each CCP had a section on vegetation, for instance, and so you'd need Steve Talbot, probably, to kinda help in that regard. Or certainly Chuck ... Chuck was like all over the place. Chuck doing his ... the archeolog ... archeological work and cultural resources, which was sort of a never ending job -- I mean, endless work could have been done there. So, they were ... they were great resources.

NO – Who ... who was ... who was the Chief of Resource Support before you arrived [indecipherable], do you remember?

PS -- We didn't overlap and so ...

NO – Was it a ... oh, the name escapes me, but he went to ... went down to King Salmon as the Refuge Manager ...

PS -- That's exactly right. Ron ...

NO – Ron ...

PS -- It was Ron ...

NO – 'Ron' is right. What's the ...

PS -- That's who it was.

NO – It was Ron.

PS -- It was Ron.

NO – Big ... big fellow.

PS -- Jovial guy. Big guy.

NO – Jovial guy. Yeah.

PS -- And Joe had just ... Joe Mezzoni had just selected him to be the Refuge Manager at Kings Sal... in Kings Salmon ...

NO – Becharof.

PS -- ... for Becharof, Alaskan Peninsula the Becharof Refuge, when they combined those refuges. And his last name ... I can't recall.

NO – I'll remember it later. [see pg. 41]

PS -- I hope we do, 'cause he's the nice... I ended up being his supervisor when I became the Refuge Supervisor -- obviously ...

NO – Oh, that's right.

PS -- ... and interesting kind of experience. I'm glad you remembered him.

NO – Don't imagine you got a chance in the three months to get out ... out of the office very much, [indecipherable] very much.

PS -- I didn't. I didn't much at the beginning, that's for sure. It was ... and it was in the ... we arrived in March of '86, and so weather in Alaska in March is not particularly, you know, great. I thought, you know, I'm coming there kind of very green in terms of understanding Alaska environment and culture and the whole thing, but the first couple of months, I think I mostly, you know, was around Anchorage. One of my first trips -- and I think it might have been my first trip -- was that ... that spring - with you. Or could have been the next spring. But it was spring. I think it was that first spring I was there, when we went to Nunivak Island to deliver ... to present a draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

NO – I think that was in, if I remember correctly, that was in 1987.

PS -- It was '87.

NO – Or we probably would have ... yeah, it would have been, probably the beginning of '87.

PS -- Ok. That's when ...

NO – 'Cause I remember there was snow when we were there.

PS -- There was certainly snow.

NO – So it was probably that late winter / early spring.

PS -- And I was so ill-prepared for that that trip, I can tell you. I thought spring meant spring and not ... spring does not mean the same thing in ... on Nunivak Island as ... you can't look at the calendar and determine that spring is here based upon Nunivak ...

NO – So once ... once you became ... was Joe actually your boss as ... as ...

PS -- Yes.

NO – ... Resource Support as well as when you became the Refuge Supervisor?

PS -- Exactly. It ... the ... all of the various supervisory positions there worked through Joe. Joe, who was the Deputy to John P. Rogers, and ... and Joe supervised Refuge

Support along with Clay Hardy and the ... and the branch ... or Division of Planning and ... and then of course the two Refuge Supervisors - would have been John Kurtz and Bob Delaney at that time, and the Realty as well, and that would ...

NO – That's right.

PS -- That would have been the Realty Chief before Sharon Janis arrived.

NO – Uh, Metice.

PS -- That's right, Bill Metice. Oh, my gosh. Yes, that's right, Bill Metice was there. Are so I think it was like, he supervised probably six or eight people in all, in total. And the Refuge and Wildlife, of course, was the ... by far the largest part of the Fish & Wildlife Service in Alaska, with all the huge refuge presence that was out there and across the landscape. And then ... I mean ... and ... and then, just the Realty ... the Realty program functions associated with that, and ... and all that went with that ... that huge, huge mountain of land.

NO – What were the ... what were the refuges that you supervised as Refuge Supervisor?

PS -- Initially it was ... it ... we sp... we split the state in half, and that came to change over time, because we did combine them after a ... after a while... a couple of years. But in 1980 ... so I became the refuge supervisor in 19... late '86, I believe, and then, for next couple of years ... the first couple of years it was the southern refuges. So it was: Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge; the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge; Alaska Peninsula; Becharof; Togiak National Wildlife Refuge; the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. So it was sort of the coastals and southern refuges that ... and of course, the Alaska Maritime stretches from southeast Alaska all the way up ... up north to northwest Alaska. So it ... it ... it's really a huge coastal presence - that refuge, and spread out for ... for hundreds -- if not thousands -- of miles, I suppose. But ... And Kenai ... I mentioned Kenai first ... And Kodiak. I may not have mentioned Kodiak, but it certainly was ... There were ... the issues that ... that I dealt with in the first couple of years, all cert... really were focused on ... on all those refuges, but particularly we had issues at Kenai Refuge, Alaska Maritime a bit as well, and Yukon Delta. All ... all ended up taking quite a bit of time in the first couple of years because of different - but sort of critical - issues. I can remember, for instance, the ... the development of the Tiglax. The ... the first ... I mean, not first, but the huge investment in a new - brand new - research vessel that we were going to have. It was ... it turned out it wasn't delivered for a couple more years, but it was all in the design, and how we would use this vessel, or the planning associated with ... with this ... this one-of-a-kind facility for the Alaska Maritime Refuge. In the case of Kenai Refuge, the issues were ... were public use and ... and ... how we would manage public use in the new environment that we were ... we were transitioning to. Because, I think, the days of the 1960's and '70's in ... in terms of how we would manage these properties, was changing. Heretofore it'd been sort of a hands off kind of a management scenario. But as we had built up a presence in the state, and the staff had been hired in all these refuges -- and not just the Refuge Manager, but now they had full blown biologists; and they had planning expertise; they had fisheries expertise; they had, of course, maintenance workers and the like -- the issue ... we began to really be managers of the property. And, well, with management comes controversy. Particularly when it ... when it coincides with uses -- public uses -- and other uses. And Kenai was certainly a focal point for that. Growing concerns about the use of the Russian River and ... and the fishery resource that runs through that refuge. We had huge issues between

their biologists and when we came ... when it came to managing for mammals as well ... I mean, things like fur-bearers, and moose, caribou, let's see, you know, how we would manage the hunting programs and the trapping programs on those ... that refuge, became sort of a lightening rod for issues that were ... were sort of an indication of things to come I think. If things ... the conflicts always seemed to show up at Kenai first. And ... and it was only a sort of forewarning of the kinds of conflicts that would occur other places, as we, as a Service, built our presence in our ... in our management goals and objectives, in a way that ... that might be not totally in sync with other people and or other organizations.

NO – Kenai was unique too in that it was ... was the one ... one Alaskan refuge that was probably most like a lower 48 refuge, because it was road accessible. You mentioned the public use, because it was the one place people could drive to in a ... in a day or an afternoon from Anchorage and ... and fish, or loot, or whatever it was.

PS -- That's absolutely ... it was, you know, if you were going to visit Alaska, or even [if] you're a resident of Alaska, you had, at sometime, went to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge -- even if you didn't know you went to the Kenai, because you might be going there just to catch a king salmon on the Kenai River and had no idea that it was a refuge. Or ... or you might, you know, want to backpack on the refuge, or get into one of the wilderness cabins that were out there. And you might know more - that you were on a national wildlife refuge. But it certainly was Anchorage's playground, if you will, in terms of hunting, fishing, and just general recreation. And with that comes all the challenges confronting people ... people ... people management, and ... and people resource management issues. And so, it became a kind of ... it was like ... it was the one refuge that was most like the lower 48, as you said, and I think you're ... you're right ... you're dead on.

NO – Kenai was also unique in that it was the first Comprehensive Conservation Plan that was completed. So it ... when you were involved, it was at a point where we were implementing, basically, that new plan. Not a lot of which, you know ... some people, including the state, appreciated it. So, ...

PS -- That's exactly right. And I think that was ... we finally put down on paper those ... and the CCPs were a chance to put down on paper what actually was the value added of that national wildlife refuge. And ... and that then brought out all of the different perspectives, or opinions, about how that ... what ... how that should take form. And in the end, the Refuge Manager, and I guess, ultimately the Regional Director, would have to make decision about what ... what are the goals and objectives, and what was the value added of this refuge. And it wasn't ... the same any more, as it was. And we were going to manage it differently, because it was a special place ... or is a special place. And ... and it wasn't going to be in total ... the total control of the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game. And we were going to have to sort of manage this together. And ... and that then sparked differing opinions. We certainly had our ... our ... our 'biologist wars' I call them, of those days, when we had the two 'Ted's'. We had our Ted Bailey and -- as the biologist at Kenai, who was very passionate about what he believed in and how it ought to be managed - - and then we had Ted Spraker, who was the game biologist for the south east, or whatever ... however they broke it out, he was a regional biologist for the area for the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game, and ... and he had his views of it. And it was ... they were very different views, and they were very different personalities. And those personalities, and those views, clashed, and became sort of the ... one of the myriad of challenges that occurred. We developed the CCP, and that gave sort of general direction. And our plan, as

you know better than I, Norm, was ... were ... was to then step that sort of broad plan for this ... this multimillion acre property, into ... into implementation, or step down plans. And we had a number of those develop on Kenai first. And again, things seemed always to happen first at Kenai. And ... and ... and the Refuge Manager at that time was ... I had hired him because the Refuge Supervisor ... we had lost the Refuge Manager ... Oh, we had to replace Bob ... Bob Delaney.

NO – Bob Delaney was the Manager of the while the Plan was being done. Then he became the Refuge Supervisor.

PS -- Refuge Supervisor ... and we had that open for a while. And then I recruited, and we hired, Dan Dozier as the Refuge Manager, at that point. And Dan came without Alaska experience, but had lots of refuge experience. And in hindsight, it was a big step for Dan, because lots of new things in Alaska, and things were different in Alaska. And they really are – different. I mean, we say that cavalierly often, and we make joke of it in the Fish & Wildlife Service, you know, ‘Alaska’s different.’ But, that was a case of where, I think Dan found that, you know, while Kenai was similar in some ways to the lower 48, it was still in the middle of Alaska. And the culture, the people, the history, is all different. And very different. And it was a tough ... tough kind of transition. And then you add the formula where you have very strong willed staff who were at Kenai and ... competent and interesting ... I just was ... had a chance to visit with Ed Bangs the other day ...

NO – Oh, really?

PS -- ... at the ... he is in the Advanced Leadership Development Program for the Fish & Wildlife Service at NCTC ...

NO – Yeah he’s ... I’d gotten a card from him and said he was going to be at NCTC last week.

PS -- He was. And I hadn’t seen Ed in some time. He had moved from ... from Kenai ... sometime, and I don’t know when ... probably in the 90’s, sometime, after I’d left Fish & Wildlife Service. But he ... I mean Alaska. But he moved to Montana to work on bears and wolves for the Fish & Wildlife Service there. And anyway, he’s in this program, but it brought back old memories of those days when Ed was very ... Ed was a very passionate guy, and Ted Bailey was there as the lead biologists. And Mike Hedrick was a very strong willed and passionate Deputy Refuge Manager.

NO – And he had Rick Johnston.

PS -- Rick Johnston! Who was the pilot biologist for the ... and just loved the area – dearly. Just, you know, he would just want to kiss every square inch of that ... of the Kenai. And ... and flew it all. So it was really fun to see the passion, but obviously that brings challenges. And one of them that I mentioned in my ... my brief little history and remember fairly well is ... is the ... trying to resolve at Kenai -- since we’re on Kenai I suppose I should stay there for a minute -- is the charrette that we ... we did. We had the fur-bearer management plan, one of these step down plans that we thought would ... we would use to resolve differences ... differences. We ... to set a course ...

NO – Set a course...

PS -- Set a course, as much as anything, for the specifics of what this CCP had laid out for fur-bearers. And of course we wanted fur-bearers to be well managed, and, you know, and sustainable and used, et cetera, et cetera. But fur-bearer management – trapping, if you will, let's just say it – trapping – was ... really became a ... a lightning rod for ... for it, because there were folks on the staff who felt that the taking of ... of ... we were not managing the trapping, and the fur-bearers, as we should, and it was more weighted towards the use by trappers. And then the fur-bearer management plan was going to kind of set this course. Well, it ... all it did was stimulate that, you know - provoke the debate - I guess, in more ... a more robust way. And of course, we had the Alaska Department of Fish and Game feeling that we ought to, you know, use the refuge as a ... as a source for trapping for a ... you know, whether it be recreation, or commercial, or whatever ... it's ... you know ... wonderful place to be trapping. And there's a long history of trapping. And there were other interests at play -- both within our staffs [indecipherable], but more importantly is, anytime we deal with these plans, whether a CCP or a step down, we should be doing that in ... in light of public interest, as well the public debate, on fur-bearer ... trap ... fur-bearer management plan for Kenai was pretty intense. We had folks on a ... on the side of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance was ... was passionate about not particularly appreciating the ... the trapping that was going on there, and felt that it was ... it was hurting some of the populations, and certainly they had some ... just fundamental problems with trapping, you know, just say it that way. And they ... they weren't ... it wasn't in their value system to ... to really embrace trapping, if you will. And so they were ... they were in Alaska. As well as other interest groups like the National Audubon Society, the Kenai Peninsula Trappers Association. And all brought different perspectives along the way. All of which we were going to try to resolve in this fur-bearer management plan. Well, we struggled and struggled and struggled. There were very drawn out kind of series of – skirmishes, for lack of a better word, and trying to get course forward. And it was ... it was clear that we weren't going to get a consensus, and that the parties were beginning to really kind of auger in to their positions on this, and it was ... there was not going to be resolved. And ... and ... and I ... I can remember the day that you came to my office, Norm, and said 'I got an idea, you know, this is kind of an immovable object, this thing called the fur-bearer management plan for the Kenai Refuge. And ... and it's just ... it's just ... it ... it's causing acrimony throughout. Our staffs are now not talking to each other. We're just in constant conflict. I got an idea. How about this ... I got an idea how we might do ... we might resolve this. A thing called a charrette.' And I looked at ... I looked at you, Norm, and I thought, 'well, I'll be willing to try anything, but I at least have to know what this thing is first,' 'Cause I was ... I was pretty desperate to figure out ... and I was working with my counterpart Dan Tim at the time, with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and he and I were trying to moderate this ... this like war. And he was very reasonable guy and ... and he had his pains, as I did mine, but we were ... we were able to work them out together -- he and I. But all these other interests weren't. We said 'ok, what is this thing, Norm, what is this thing called a charrette?' And you explained it to me. It was sort of a prolonged, intense, meeting that was intended to ... to force people to talk, and force people to resolve these things, and not just have them linger and ... and ... and really ... people in a room together, living together for a couple of days, frankly, where they couldn't escape and they couldn't just throw stones at one another and leave. They had to work together to kind of come up in a ... in a ... compressed time period, with a solution. And so I said 'well, I'm game to try anything, let's go for it.' And so we proposed that to the ref... the Regional Director, who looked at us and ... and what we were talking about. And, I'm not sure he was ... he was all that enamored with the idea, but let it go on, and let it ... let us do it, because, I suppose, he thought there was no other, real good, choices either. So you organized it. And we invited some of the folks I mentioned before from National Audubon Society; Dave Kleine, and Ginny DeVries from the Alaska Wildlife Alliance. And folks who, heretofore, if they're ever in a room together ... would ... would ... you know, not appreciate each other – let's put it that way. You know it goes on from there. It's like the

Kenai Peninsula Trappers Association, and Soldotna even ... we had a Soldotna school teacher ...

NO – Representing the ... the general public.

PS -- ... the general public. And he was very articulate guy, I can remember -- **Larry Rockhill**, and he was trying to ... he ... one of his roles during this ... this week ... weekend long effort was to ... to ... to sort of ... sort of negotiate or facilitate some reasonable m... middle ground, you know. And we had Sarah Scanlon from the Alaska Board of Game, which was a ... you know, important force in the ... in setting regulations in the state. I was there, along with my counterpart, Dan **Tim** with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And then we had staffs who helped ... who would come in and give us sort of the technical presentations about where we were on the draft for **[fur-]** bear management plan, and different opinions. And that's when the two Ted's -- Ted Bailey from our staff on the Kenai Refuge, and Ted Spraker from the ADF&G, were there, and ... and Mike Hedrick of the ... Deputy Refuge Manager -- all attended as presenters. And the Refuge Manager was there to just sort of watch all of this go on, but he was ... he was ... he was not an active participant; he was an observer to this. And we were coming together to bring these interests to try and ... try to resolve it once and for all and have a way forward. And, I think it was a tremendous success. I mean, at the end of the weekend ... actually, I guess, it was during the week, but it was a couple day period ...

NO – I think it started ... I think we started on a ...a Wednesday, like, at one o'clock in the afternoon, and we ended it on Friday at maybe noon, or something like that. And we held it in the Kenai bunkhouse.

PS -- We did indeed and people had to live ...

NO – ... people had to stay ...

PS -- They had to stay there. We had to eat together ...

NO – Yup.

PS -- We had to ... you know, sleep together, I'll say in ... in the way that you would in a bunkhouse. And, you know, had to realize that we were ... each of us were human beings and had to learn to respect each other, even if we didn't appreciate the opinion of another. We ... we gained something by being there together, and I thought it was a marvelous setting, and a marvelous process. Frustrating at times, because, I mean, it was ... you ... everything was thrown out on the table, and the ... and the disagreements were all exposed - in full glory. But at the end of the day, we had a way forward. At the end of those two ... I say 'the day' ... at the end of those two days, we had a way forward. And we tried to bring that to, you know, to a head, move it forward, and get buy-in from those ... and the ... one of the deals was: when you leave this room, leave this process, we were to support the outcome of that thing. And ... and most did. We had some problems afterwards, because there were some folks who ... who decided that ... when they went back to their constituencies, the outcome wasn't appreciated as much, and so they began to distance themselves from that ... by force of their own cultures and their own environments ... forcing them, I guess, in a way, to kind of step away from the ... from it. But it was the single biggest event to kind of resolving what had been a fairly acrimonious issue. And we ended up finishing the fur-bearer management plan, and getting on with business. And I

think the charrette was one of those things. I'd do it again in a heartbeat -- given the same kind of dynamics and same kind of thing at stake.

NO -- Yeah. You know, it's interesting too, it ... it ... one of the reasons I ... I think I suggested it was because my long involvement with ... with the public ... dealing with the public there ... there's a situation that ... that occurs in a public meeting of a duration of an hour or two, where, basically, I like to refer to people 'peeing on the post.'

PS -- That's exactly right.

NO -- They stand up and say 'this is my position and that's it.' Period. And if you can get those same people together for a day or two or three, living together like that, you find that there's a tendency to find some common ground -- once you ... you know, draw a line in the sand.

PS -- Yeah. And they have ... they ... they ... after 'peeing' - which they all do ...

NO -- Yeah.

PS -- Ok. They gotta all 'pee on their posts' ... even in those Native ... they got to follow it up now with work ... being forced to work out ...

NO -- Yeah.

PS -- ... their opinion with somebody else's opinion, and hear somebody else's opinion - in its entirety, and then trying to find some way to go forward.

NO -- Yeah. It was an interesting experience.

PS -- It was ... it was ... I thought it was a great idea that you had. Moving on -- I would say that a couple of other really bright experiences, or memories, that I have of Alaska would have been in that spring of ... of 2 ... of 19 and 87 when you and I, and others ...

NO -- I think ...

PS -- ... probably ...

NO -- I think Bill Mauer went with us.

PS -- He might have.

NO -- Because he was running the meeting for us.

PS -- He was. I think he did. We had somebody who was physically running the meeting at Nunivak, and ... of course I was ... I was supervising ... at that time I was probably thirty- ... one / thirty-two and I was supervising ... vir ... all the refuge managers were

older than I was, and I was fairly intimidated by that. But the one up in at Yukon Delta was ... the one probably most ... most advanced in age of the ones I was supervising.

NO – Ron Perry

PS -- Ron Perry. And Ron had been out to Yukon Delta for quite some time, and had developed quite a reputation. And ... and a good one -- a good reputation. And ... a ... he was ador... he was loved by the community. And ... and ... but ... but, he was probably 10 / 15 / 20 years older than I was at that time. And I'm ... I was very green and didn't know a lot about Alaska ways. And certainly I was very green in terms of my understanding of ... of the Natives, and the relationship ... the special relationship that our refugees have with Alaska Natives, and it was ... it was at that meeting that really brought that home to me. Not only did I learn how green I was and inexperienced I was at this, but also, it gave me a huge education ... beyond my own sort of limitations ... it also moved me to be smarter -- a little bit -- incremental. One thing I was ... first education I got on that trip was ... was flying out there. And I probably ... it was March or April, and I thought, well, that meant spring. And I flew to ... we flew to Nunivak and proceeded to ... right off the plane, hop on a ... I was not prepared clothing wi... this is the bo... you know, I'll get right to the point, is, I did not bring the right cloths, Norm, for that trip. I brought the nice refuge attire. I probably brought a tie, for the formality, because we were going to be presenting to the whole community. Certainly uniform -- and the uniform at that time wasn't particularly warm, I don't think. But, so, I go out there, and we proceeded to land and I ... we had no time to change and get stuff out of the bags, so we hopped right away on snow machines, from the airport, to get to the village, where we going to have the meeting that evening. And it was ... it was not a short trip. It seemed like it went forever. Because I was ... I think there's only been a few times in my life I can remember being that cold. On the back of a snow machine ... ill prepared for this trip. And going to ... the community center I think, but I don't ... I can't ... I can see it but I ...

[indecipherable / overlapping voices]

NO – the ... probably the council chambers or meeting building or ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – ... town building. Yeah.

PS – And ... and ... Ron Perry the Refuge Manager was with us. Chuck Hunt, I dearly loved Chuck Hunt, who was our refuge interpreter, who ... long time ... Native of the Yukon Delta, and had ... we had hired him as ... a few years before that - a number of years before that, to sort of bring us along in terms of the refuge and its relationship with the people of the Yukon Delta. And he knew Yupik. And so, we needed him -- in case people presented information in Yupik. And he could also translate our in ... our English to the native language. So we went there, and the meeting was supposed to start at 7:00. Well, so, you know, Paul is very prompt. Paul Schmidt is very prompt. And he's used to the eastern way ... east ... east coast ways, and you start a meeting at 7:00, when you say you're going to start a meeting at 7:00. And I ... I ... at that time, I was a fairly impatient person, young and impatient, and ready to go and change the world, of course. And I ... we went there and 7:00 came and nobody showed up. it was just us. And, in fact, I don't think Ron was in a particular hurry to get to the place, 'cause he said nobody'd be there yet. And ... 'well, what do you mean?' 'Well, we might say this starts at 7:00. And the community may know it starts at 7:00. But they're not going to be there at 7:00.' He said, 'we'll probably

be lucky to start the meeting by 8:00.’ And I thought, ‘well, that can’t be so.’ Well, he was right. It was probably close to eight o’clock before we started. And we ... we finally realized there was a critical mass to the attendance, and there’s a ... probably a majority of the village was present eventually, because it was a full room. I remember it like it was yesterday. The room was packed with people eventually, kept kinda coming in and little ... little dribbles and drabs. And then eventually, it was kind of like, critical mass, everybody’s there. And it was something that signaled to Chuck - and maybe Ron - that it was time to start. And I think it was because some of the key elders from the community had arrived, and they were probably one of the last to arrive, at that time. So, Norm Olson began ... or probably Ron introduced it, I think, and I might have said a few words at the beginning. And then Norm Olson, the best planner that the Fish & Wildlife Service has ever had, in my estimation, began to show what our le... boards ... what do you call them ...

NO – Our ... our alternatives [indecipherable]

PS – Yeah. Alternatives -- but they set up on these ... these ... these hard boards.

NO – On ... on ... foam core boards.

PS – Foam core boards. And you had beautiful ... artwork, I’ll say. But, you know, designs, and ... and sketches of ... of ... our ... of plans for the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. And in particular, focusing on Nunivak, at this point. Nunivak Island. and ... and it was you know giving some of the history of the Island and giving, you know, some of the ideas for us, and moving forward, and some of the wildlife populations, and things like that. and ... and Norm, you ... you were eloquent, and articulate. And all along Chuck is ... is ... is ... is interpreting this for the crowd ... for the people who attended. And then it became time for us to hear from the public. And, so we probably had the stage for half an hour, an hour, I don’t remember precisely, to give them information. And then it was their time to say ... ‘well, what do you think of our ideas.’ And ... and the room got quiet. And this older gentleman – elder -- from the ... I think he was from the back row -- but if he wasn’t in the back row, he was near the back -- and he stood up. And you could’ve heard a pin drop, in my memory of this thing, when he stood up. Because that was signal to the community that here was going to be the real ... this was going to be the real comment, whatever it was; that he was going to give it. And he proceeded ... it lasted forever ... I’ll bet he spoke for 15 minutes.

NO – And everything had to be translated back into English.

PS – And he spoke in Yupik. And Chuck tried to translate it along the way, a little bit. And then eventually, Chuck pulled away. Now, it wasn’t long after he proceeded that Chuck pulled away, and he just kept ... the elder kept going on in Yupik. And I stood there, and Norm, you stood there, and Ron Perry stood there, and we listened -- not understanding a word what he was saying, but being respectful for him and ... and of him and for the whole community. And at the end, Chuck stood up and ... and I said ‘Chuck, I have to know, you know, basically, what he said.’ And ... and the message was crystal clear. He ... Chuck said ‘well you don’t really want to know everything he said, ‘cause it wasn’t all flattery.’ And in particular he said ... but the summary is ... is, and the statement at the end that he - the elder - concluded with, was that ... that ‘you never asked us, and we never voted.’ And what he was saying was ... was volumes ... was just volumes. Because what he said was: the people have never ... the people who’s this land it was, and they had lived on this land -- for generations ... the Fish & Wildlife Service in the early 1900’s came in and somehow got declared a national wildlife refuge ... their consensus - and they’re a voting kind of a

people - and they said that they ... the Fish & Wildlife Service, at that time, never asked the locals whether they cared one way or the other about it. It was ... it was 'declared' -- not asked. And so, his point was that the government - US government - never asked them if they ... they wanted a national wildlife refuge to be established. And they certainly never voted on anything that would have given it some ... stature in the community. So essentially, he threw us back 60 / 70 / 80 years, of development of the national wildlife refuge. And ... and ... and my jaw just sank, because I knew ... there was ... I don't know ... where would you start. I ... you know, I can't apologize for the, you know, generations that came before me. But, realize how green this ... this ... that ... that I was in understanding what this land meant to these people, and what we had done -- we - white man from lower 48 -- had done to the land that they loved and they subsisted on. And ... and had ... and had we truly respected that? And the answer is, of course, 'no.' And that ... now where do we ... were do we go from here? It was hard to go from there. And I ... I'm sure that, frankly, I'm sure that many more people got up and spoke that ... that evening, but none were ... are in my memory. The only thing that's in that memory is my ... that elder. Who apparently, during that long diatribe, called me all kinds of names, 'cause I was the ... I was the head, if you would, of the US government, as it were. And so I was ... I was the devil as far as he was concerned in his remarks. But I have to tell you that, the meeting went ... when it was over, that gentleman came forward to me and invited me in to his house. And it was late. I bet it was 11 / 12 o'clock at night - what ever time it was. And I ... I didn't know him, and he had just said all these bad things. And I was 'well' ... [indecipherable] I looked over at Chuck and I looked over at Ron and I said, you know, 'how should I take ... you know, what should I do?' And -- accept the invitation, of course. And so I went to his house. His house it was as ... no bigger than this room in ... almost in its entirety. Maybe a little bit bigger than this room. And the walls seemed very, very thin for the environment it was in. And he told me ... he proceeded ... we had coffee -- terrible coffee -- until like 2 o'clock in the morning. And ... and there was there was seal oil there, and there was muktuk in ... my first taste of muktuk, which is the bell... the ... the ... the belly of the ... of a whale. And ... and all the ... the ... and all that that night, for the next couple of hours, in this room. And ... and he ... and he was a joy to be with, and a pleasure. And I learned more in that couple hours than I could ever, ever have learned from a book or anything of that nature. Told me how he had raised the eight or ten children in this place. And you ... it was just a fascinating evening and ... of ... of very a warm and acc... and understanding kind of environment. So, it was ... it was really an [wsheW] an education that you could never buy, at that moment, for somebody who was ... who was young, inexperienced, naïve, but wanting in his heart -- me - to do the right thing. And it was a ... a wonderful experience. And I'll never, ever, ever, ever, ever, forget that.

NO -- Well, remember, thinking back to that too, afterwards ... when talking to Chuck afterwards, there were some very specific things that they were concerned about. One was the fact that the ... you know, I think it was the ... the Department of Agriculture had in... introduced reindeer on the Island, back in the 1920's or '30's, and not asked the local people whether they **wanted** reindeer. So there were ... they had all these reindeer on the Island. And it was ok -- they ate them ...

PS -- Sure.

NO -- ... you know, and said it was ok. But no one ever asked them if they wanted them. And the other thing was wilderness. The ... there was a

wilderness line had been right straight through the Island -- the southern half was wilderness, northern half was not wilderness.

PS – Yes.

NO – And no one had ever asked them about that.

PS – Exactly.

NO – And there was some issues dealing with ... like, they had a lot of their fish camps and ... and old village sites and ancestors buried in the wilderness, and they were concerned about that wilderness, that they would be able to go down there ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... and use it, you know.

PS – What did that mean? Yeah. Can I trust what this means? And, you know, how will this affect me? Oh, you bet. Oh, my gosh, Norm, I'm glad your memory is ... is better than mine in that. Yeah, I do remember those issues coming up. And we probably didn't have great answers for that -- in terms of why we drew the line the way we did. I don't know. But we had ... there was a proposal. It was a draft. It was a draft CCP, at that time.

NO – Right, that was the draft CCP.

PS – And we were looking for their comment about it.

NO – Yeah.

PS – But I think they hadn't learned, or hadn't had enough reason to trust us. And so there was lots of ... particularly, you know, you and me, I'd say. Probably trusted Ron; and certainly, I think they had trust in Chuck. But, what you and I might say was, 'hum ... these guys are coming and going ... these faces I see from Anchorage, you know, can I trust what their going to do?'

NO – And that was a differ... a difficult part of the job, was trying to explain fairly complex, western concepts ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... of planning, and maps, and drawing things, ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... and ownership, and everything, to a society that, really, where that was alien -- just totally alien.

PS – Yeah. Oh, oh, I mean, ownership of property. It's not even ... I mean, they use it -- they don't own it. They use it to live. They don't own it. And we're ... we're talking about owning, and deciding what happens on this property, et cetera, et cetera. And they ... it just ... your right. Exactly. That's a foreign thing [\[indecipherable\]](#).

NO – It was ... it was an interesting ... I know, you ... speaking ... I ... I was the same way when I first went to Alaska, and my first meetings in the bush, you know. I was just totally ... I was, you know, really a ... a romantic almost, about it, in a sense. And very naïve. And then you discover the harsh realities of ... of what it's like to live in places that. And ... and deal with people, you know, whom ... have done you wrong in the past.

PS – Absolutely.

NO – So, ...

PS – Absolutely.

NO – It made it very difficult.

PS – Made it very difficult. And we ... we tried to be sensitive, but ... to their needs, but, in the end it was ... we had ... we had a lot ... there was lots to ... to recover from, I think, in the past.

NO – Yeah, that's ...

PS – We're still recovering from it, I'm sure, up there.

NO – Oh, I think so. I think so, absolutely. And the Yukon Delta was especially difficult -- because of the language barrier. It was one of the few places - one or two places in Alaska - where people still relied ... where English was a second language. They relied on their Yupik or Athabascan, you know, in ... in the interior. So you had to rely on translation, which made meetings a lot longer and ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... a lot more difficult. And I ... and ... and you'd get to those things where ... there ... would ... someone would say a lot of stuff, and Chuck would talk back, or one of the other interpreters, and ... and then they'd look at you and say 'ok, we can go on with the meeting now.' What happened, you know?

PS – What happened?

NO – What were you guys talking about?

[End of Tape1 Side 1](#)

Start of Tape1 Side 2

PS – That’s true. And Chuck would do a great job ...

NO – Right.

PS – ... of just telling us what we needed to know ...

NO – Exactly.

PS – ... in terms what they’d said.

NO – Distilling it down to essence.

PS – Distilling it down to the essence and ... so ... yeah, very interesting dynamic ...

NO – Yeah, Chuck was a wonderful guy. I was, you know, I’m sorry to see him ... him pass away so ...

PS – I ... I was sad that day, as well. He ... he ... Chuck had a rough life and ...

NO – Oh, yeah. Recovering alcoholic and ...

PS – We ... and Ron Perry, bless his soul, for ... for all the work ... he work... you know, he worked with ... with Chuck to ... and ... and the other staff members, to ... to try to keep him ... productive – let’s say. And ... and he was a wonderful contribution to Alaska, to Fish & Wildlife Service, and ... and, you know, Chuck had lots to offer, but he had many, many challenges. I mean, Ron tells the stories, I think of ... he had to go get him out of jail ... and other things that would happen ... he was, as you said, a recovering alcoholic ...

NO – He would occasionally fall off the wagon.

PS – He would and ...

NO – But a great guy. And I always remember that warm smile. He was always smiling.

PS – Always smiling. And he knew ... the first time he saw me he had ... he ... he had a green guy in his midst, and he was going to take full advantage of that. And I love him for it.

NO – Yeah. I really enjoy seeing his picture in ...

PS – I do too.

NO – ... in the commons, there in the dining hall ...

PS – That's very special ...

NO – ... as one of the conservation heroes.

PS – ... very special picture that brings a ... brings a lot of memories to me as well.

NO – So was it was a ... a ... a ... a marked experience?

PS – It was!

NO – A learning experience ...

PS – A learning experience. I grew a lot that day, or two days, or what ever it was. Probably spent the night someplace.

NO – Oh, yeah. I think we stayed in ... actually ...

PS – [indecipherable]

NO – ... the Service had a small cabin ...

PS – Oh, it did?

NO – ... just outside the village with a few bunks in it and I think we stayed there. Spent the night there, and then left, probably, the next day.

PS – Yeah.

NO – Flew out the next day. Yeah. It's ... it's one of the things I fondly think back of too, in ... in terms of Alaska and my experiences there. There were a couple of other things I wanted to sort of jump back to. We were talking about Kenai, and ... and the problems with Kenai -- especially the public use related problems. And one of the things that came out of the ... the Comprehensive Conservation Plan was the ... the concept of the Skilak ... Skilak Loop ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – ... recreation area which ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – ... where we proposed to take – what - 30 / 40 thousand acres and close it to hunting and ... and just provide ... which didn't set well with the state, if I remember.

PS – Of course not. Because that was the road accessible ... that was the most accessible areas -- and certainly the prime hunting areas -- for people who, you know, couldn't, or wouldn't, get out into the back ground -- the back. And so you're taking away the prime hunting spots, in some cases. And ... and Kenai had produced some ... some big bull moose over time. And lots of them around the Skilak Loop. And one of the reason... where was the balance? That was the trade off, if you will, because now were going to take advantage of the moose -- the big bull moose -- in a different way. We weren't going to harvest them. We were going to enjoy them -- viewing. And people should ... you know, that was really tough ... another tough issue, is right. Because, now those moose were going to be treasured for the viewing opportunities that they provide around the Skilak Loop, but ... but somebody couldn't look through the scope at them anymore.

NO – Yes. I remember the story that was always told when I worked at Kenai on the Plan ... was about some ... a family that had stopped on the Skilak Loop Road to ... to view a moose that was off in ... in the ... in a meadow. And ... and another car pulled up with some local people. And they walked off the edge of the road and shot it.

PS – Oh, my gosh.

NO – Which I have no doubt that that happened.

PS – I have no doubt that that happened either. And I have no doubt that left in the ... in the ... you know ... mark on those people. Both ... both parties, I'm sure, in some respect. But certainly the party that was enjoying this moose and ... and then watching it die in front their face. I'm sure that wasn't their goal in ... in that one.

NO – Yeah. And Ed [?] I remember when we did the ... the public hearing for Kenai Plan, up in Anchorage. I remember someone standing up and saying ... a white fella standing up and saying that ... an Alaska resident standing up and saying 'well, this is the first step to the Fish & Wildlife Service closing down all of the national wildlife refuges in Alaska to hunting.'

?? -- Yup and it was it was 30 / 40 thousand acres out of millions of acres.

PS – Millions of acres.

?? -- Which are still open to hunting.

PS – Which are still open and ... it's amazing. Yes. But it's always that ... that fear of, you know, the government and the future. and people will turn that into whatever ... you know, however they've been mistreated in the past, and create a ... a future based upon their perception of that. And, oh, yes, scare tactics. That scare tactic has been used many a time.

NO – Yeah.

PS – And, oh, the Fish & Wildlife Service is gonna turn into the National Park Service. Was always nice for the Fish & Wildlife Service to have the National Park Service out

there, because there was only one group hated more than us -- it was always going to be the National Park Service because of their ... at least the ... to local people ...

NO – Right.

PS – I mean, of course their value ... properties to the world in a sense, but and ... and appreciated by many, many people, but the locals didn't necessarily appreciate management of ... of the national parks system up there, and so they'd always compare and contrast. And however bad they called ... whatever bad names they called the Fish & Wildlife Service, they had worse names for the National Park Service.

NO – Yeah. Other thing that came to mind as we were talking about the refuges that you were ... you supervised Alaska Maritime we mentioned the Tiglax ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – ... the vessel research vessel, which is still in operation ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... and widely used ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... throughout the Aleutian Islands and whatever. Were you ... were you involved at all with the a ... the a ... visitor center for ... Alaska Maritime [indecipherable]?

PS – Only at the ... only at the initial kind of concept stages, way back when ... is that we ... you know, there was always ... being ... Homer would be a great place for, you know, world class kind of visitor center. But I left before they really put pen to paper and the planning really got involved. It was more of a vision and a concept by ... by John Martin and some of the staff members of the Alaska Maritime Refuge, and it's really come to fruition. I ... I can't wait to go see it. I've not seen it, to be honest with you, and I ... I ...

NO – Yeah, neither have I.

PS – I would dearly love to see that place. But speaking of the Tiglax, I can remember christening it.

NO – Interesting.

PS – You know, I'm a biologist by ... you know, the bunch of things that Alaska brought to me, experiences that I never would have imagined ... you know, they didn't train me for ... but, it was time to christen the Tiglax, once we got it all ... finally inspected, and it was brought up from, probably Bellingham ... I can't remember exactly where it was built ... Bellingham, Washington, and ... and it was on site, and now it was time to christen it, to ... to bless it, essentially, for ... for the sea, before it would be used. And we had Katherine Stevens -- Senator Stevens' wife ... you always have ... I guess it's tradition to have a

woman, somehow, be a part of the christening. Anyway, she was going to be that ... and I wondered how we get a bottle of champagne to break on the front of it. It was just a funny kind of day -- fun day. It was a ... it was an overcast and, actually, rainy day, and Senator Stevens was there ... and his wife Katherine, were there. And ... and all of Homer came out to see this christening. And ... and we had a ... indeed, believe it or not, they do make special bottles of champagne, but you have to specially order these bottles, so that they do break. And they come netted, so that when they break, they don't ... aren't ... aren't a hazard. And, sure enough, it ... it worked. I think she had to actually swing at it twice, 'cause it didn't break the first time, as I remember. But it did break the second time. And ... and we ... we christened it. And so it's ready to be operational. The ... the next, you know, how many ever years since then, have been a ... have been a ... that ... that vessel has gone thousands and thousands of miles out the Aleutian Islands, and I've been able to travel on it a couple of times, and ...

NO – Oh, good.

PS – ... and it's been a ... just a huge pleasure, to be there at ... to see it actually being used, and in wildlife management. And some of the key things it's done, is not only research -- which is really important in areas like that where we don't know a lot -- but also in management, and reestablishing populations of birds that were extirpated because of predators and ... and ... and our mismanagement in the past. But some of the ... Aleutian ... Aleutian Canada Geese - a great example, where we've now, through the use of the Tiglax and other things, removed introduced foxes and rats from our islands. And ... and the population of Aleutian Canada Goose, once threatened and endangered, is now, not only not on the ... the endangered species list now, but now, it's like, growing leaps and bounds, because of that action that people have taken. And, in fact, it's now on the verge of being overpopulated, because of we're over successful at that. But it's ... what a ... what a rewarding thing, to see those kinds of things develop as a result of a ... vessel, in this case. Just a ... a vessel. And it's ... it sees the most spectacular lands in ... in the United States, in my estimation. The Aleutian Islands are just special places. The weather is crappy all the time, virtually. But they are very, very special places. If you ever ... anybody ever gets a chance to fly out the Aleutians ... or boat out the Aleutians, on a crisp, clear day, and see that ring of fire, if you will, that ... the volcanoes that were there ... or are there ... not active, most of them, anymore. But, they're there. And the creation of these Islands that are just very, very ... they're very spectacular. I'll just say that. Lovely place just to be. All the way out to the end. Where ... I can tell you a story. I flew out once to Shemya Air Force Base, which is on, actually, on one of our ... it's on refuge lands. It's an Air Force base that's ... that was built, years ago, to keep an eye on the Soviet ... then Soviet Union ... and not our best of friends in those days. And so, it had about 1000 people stationed out ... GI's stationed out on this place. And they were there ... it was really intended to watch over ... watch what was coming on the horizon from the Soviet Union. And it was literally a flat rock on the end of the Aleutian Islands. Have you ever been there?

NO – No.

PS – It's ... it's, you know, probably about a square mile -- flat rock. And ... ahh -- it's a desolate looking place. At the very end. And ... and it's not the end of the world, I guess, but it ... you can see it from there. It's just like ... oh, the wind ...

NO – I've seen those tee-shirts around.

PS – Oh, my lands. ‘Cause ... ok ... so it’s a ... I’ve been there one ... a couple of times. Visited a couple of times. One ... the first time I got experience of this thing ... the wind blows constantly. In fact, they have a wind sock there that’s humorous because it’s actually a log on the end of a chain. And it’s called ‘Shemya wind sock’ ‘cause the wind blows so much it’s going to blow this sock ... this log, essentially, that’s hanging there. Well, this one day I was flying out there, we were doing some business out there, I think I was joining up with the Tiglax or something, and it was going to stop at Shemya, and I ... next to me in the seat ... next to me in this ... this ... basically it’s a ... it’s a commercial flight, but it’s basically for the military -- to take people to and from there ... there ... the Air Force base. And after this *looong* flight from Anchorage we’re about to land, I had this guy next to me -- this GI -- had been totally quiet the whole trip. And I’m not a particularly talkative person on a plane but, you know, usually I’ll at least visit with them a little bit. But he was clearly ... didn’t ... he was ... he was contemplating it - this thing - as were landing. He’s looking out the window of this plane at where he was going to live for the next year, ‘cause they had a year assignment, without families, on this rock. Flat rock. Crappiest weather you can ever imagine. For a year. With facilities that ... that I can’t even begin to describe. And he’s ... we’re landing. And he speaks for the first time after this ... three hour flight I guess it was ... and he says ‘only 364 more days to go.’ He didn’t have to say anymore. He was not looking forward to his year assignment out there, after he looked out at it. But it was ... I just can never ... one thing he ... he said the whole trip was ‘only 364 more days to go.’

NO – That would be tough duty.

PS – Tough duty.

NO – Tough duty, yeah. What are some of the other highlights of your ... your ... your tour of duty as ... as a Refuge Supervisor in Alaska. I know you ... seemed to me one of the things you mentioned in ... when you gave me your ... your biography here, was the re-introduction of caribou ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – ... at Togiak.

PS – Yeah. That was a great little exper... project. The Refuge had ... part of their CCP wanted to re-introduce ... caribou have been ... had been extirpated ... and very low populations out on the Togiak. And yet, we knew that the environment and the habitat would [be] capable of holding and sustaining populations of caribou. And so part of the CCP was to say that we would like to re-introduce a population out on Togiak. And ... so that was one of the, sort of the visions, for the ... for the Refuge. Well, how do you begin to do that, in a place that hasn’t seen them in a while and is ... and where the locals are very anxious for fresh meat? They didn’t have a lot of big game to pick from ... the Togiak wasn’t ... I mean, they had some moose population, but not particularly robust moose populations. Caribou populations had been ... had ... hadn’t been in there in years. Although, occasionally you’d get some migrants that will come through and ... but, not real good populations. And if we were going to invest in re-introducing populations out there, we wanted, we needed, the support, and in fact, the ... the patience of the locals. And they weren’t quite sure ... again, back to what we said earlier about trusting us in this whole effort. But a lot of work went into it from people like Sue Mathews, in particular, I’ll call her attention to ... give her credit for this. And she said ... and gave me some advice when we were sort of planning out this effort, is that we really have their total buy-in. So we

invested a lot of time in public meetings and in ... and in ... and getting people to buy-in to the idea. And part of the buy-in was that eventually you would ... we would have populations that would sustain a harvest. But, that we need some time before we could have a harvest, because if we started shooting ... you know, we bring out, you know, 50 animals, and we started in hunting them right away, we ... we wouldn't sustain this as a population. So we had biologists who would ... who would chart out the growth of the population, and what they thought it could sustain in terms of a harvest, and when it could sustain it. And we began to put that forward. Well, the biologists in their ... in their ... their zeal to have some significant growth to the population, were ... had proposed to me that we would not hunt them for, I want to guess, I think maybe 10 years, or something like that. And I had Sue Mathews come in to the meeting, and she said 'Paul, the locals won't stand for that. You want their buy-in, you've got to give them something sooner than 10 years. That's too far out.' So we began to work on this biological question, with the public interest at heart. And trying to figure out how ... what we could give them in terms ... to keep them supportive, and ... and ... of the overall project. And so we laid out a different kind of scenario where there could be a harvest of maybe only a couple of animals in the first few years, but begin ... and manage it really tightly. But it would still allow for some growth. Albeit, not as fast as the biologists had wanted. But we had to ... it was a real case of getting the public to buy-in to it. And it ... it turned out to be a great success in the end. And do we ... so we spent, you know, a few thousand dollars to ... to capture caribou. I can't remember where they came from, but we captured caribou and trans-located them there. And we allowed people, the second or third year, to start hunting them -- but under very managed conditions. And now, to this day, they're ... they're hunting caribou out there. So it's a ... it's a neat little success story, I'll say, that ... where you really valued the public's interest, and the value ... the local people and ... and ... and the biologists' opinions, too.

NO – Just to balance those things.

PS – Had to balance those things out, a little bit. And then there was another memory of ... speaking of caribou ... I mean, you said reindeer, earlier - about Nunivak. Here's another little ... here's the funniest story -- and the most embarrassing story, probably, for Paul Schmidt -- up there, is the removal of reindeer from Hagemeister Island.

NO – Oh, yes.

PS – That was under my watch.

NO – Oh, ok.

PS – And so ... I don't know what national papers I made that day, but ... but the plan was, as you may remember ... but, Hagemeister Island was a part of the Alaskan Maritime Refuge, and as a part of the CCP, we were planning to remove reindeer from that island. Reindeer had been introduced. They had denuded the island -- had really destroyed the island vegetation, and it was really impacting the ... the full ecosystem of Hagemeister Island, because of these reindeer. They were unmanaged. They were managed, maybe historically, by Native under BIA's watch; but long since -- no management. And apparently no one claimed ownership to them. We tried to find who owned these reindeer, and who was ... who was the rightful manager of them. But, we were unsuccessful in finding out who really is, you know ... a couple of people came forward, but they didn't want to have anything to do with them. And they certainly weren't about to get out there

and manage them, and reduce the herd and whatever. So, after many, many attempts of ... John Martin and others worked to kind of lay the groundwork for this, the decision was made -- and ... and ... and I made it -- was ... after they recommended ... that we needed to get out there and ... and ... and eliminate -- take -- kill, all the reindeer on Hagemeister Island. That was the only plan, because no one was willing to manage these ... and they were destroying the habitat -- thousands of acres, of this wonderful habitat for seabirds and other things. And so I said 'ok, I would like ... I'll give you the go ahead. You know, go out there by plane and your ... your ... your goal is to eliminate them.' And when would you do that? Well, the most efficient time to do that would be ... and by the way, lot of things had gone on ahead of that. We had opened it up for anybody to go out there and take ... take the animals, use the animals, trans-locate them, or kill them and ... and ... and salvage the meat. All those offers had been made; and so all the groundwork had been laid to this. But ... but, we weren't able to ... to take care of them through that method. Ok? And the public ... so we had to do something. We felt like we had to do something. And I gave the approval for them to ... to go out there. And the most efficient time to do it is when there was snow on the ground, so that you could spot the animals from the air. And that you would use aerial ... aerial gunning to eliminate these animals. But, if you could see them from the air, I mean, the contrast that the ... the dark skin ... the dark fur of the animals and on the white snow -- make it efficient. Well, that happened to be a month or two before Christmas. Ok? And ... um ... now, you beginning to see that Rudolph and Santa Clause and the reindeer and the story that could evolve, here. So, I gave the order. They went out there and they started eliminating. There was ... there were ... my memory's not perfect on this, but, there were more than 100 animals to be eliminated. And I ... I'm thinkin' there was a couple hundred, but, I ... I could be wrong about that. They went out there prepared to do that in fell ... sort of operation. And I approved of the investment of the money for the planes, and the ... and the staff, and whatever. And they proceeded, and to ... to shoot the animals from the air. And let them lay there. And ... and unfortunately, as a part of the operation, they had not brought enough bullets to do the job in one fell swoop. So, my fear was, and ... and that they wouldn't do it all in one fell swoop, and then word would get out. Because there's ... you can not ... as much as you would like to get permission - by the world - to go shoot reindeer from the air, that's just not something we would [\[have\]](#) ever gotten the public to generally agree with. Even as much as we could show them pictures of the ... of the bare ground, and all the damage that the reindeer are doing, you can not ... people ... the public ... general public would not allow us to do that. They would find ... court system or some other was to ... to ... public interest, whatever. So, we had to go out there, and we had to be effective at ... at it -- one fell swoop -- and then sort of ask for forgiveness, to the world. They were not successful, because they didn't bring ... they ran out of bullets, in the process of doing this operation. Came back, and weather set in. And they couldn't get back out there. In the meantime ... and they had eliminated a lot of animals, they brought back the word to me. They had done a great job, but they hadn't done ... finished the job. Word spread of this operation. I mean, you're not going to shoot a bunch of animals and not have somebody find out about it. So word spread that Fish & Wildlife Service was out on Hagemeister Island shooting reindeer before Christmas. Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer and the whole ... all ... you know, Santa's reindeer, and all that stuff. It hit Anchorage papers. It got all the way back to Washington, DC ... was the joke of the Fish & Wildlife Service, at that time, that ... that they had done this. And I can remember ... Walt Stieglitz was the Regional Director at that time, having ... had replaced ... eventually had replaced Jim Gritman, who had replaced Bob Gilmore ... even Gritman wasn't there for very long ... and Walt was not a very happy camper at that. Walt was particularly dismayed that we had not finished the job, and that we were having to answer a lot of questions to the media that were not easy to answer. Well, it put us back a year. And we eventually got back out there, because we had explained to the whole world many, many times how there wasn't ... no other solutions in place. And so, a year went by, and we finally got ... got back out there and eliminated the full population,

and were successful. But it was ... it was in our ... it was an embarrassing year, need... none... needless to say. We hadn't finished the job, and Walt was not ... not happy at all - with me, or with the Refuge, in terms of not having ... having done it. And I hadn't even asked ... I don't believe I'd even asked permission. And I certainly hadn't prepared the press for this. So, you know, everything was sort of ... this total surprise. And poor Bruce Batten, who was our Public Affairs Officer in Alaska, was doing his damndest to keep me out of as much public scrutiny, I guess -- or embarrassment -- as possible. But he was jumping through all kinds of hoops, from people making these comments.

NO – Oh, I'll bet. I'll bet.

PS – That's one of those things that I'll never forget either.

NO – Who was the ... you met the Togiak who was the refuge manager at Togiak when you did the re-introduction?

PS – Fisher is his last name.

NO – Dave.

PS – Dave Fisher. Thank you for helping me remember that.

NO – Ok. Was that before Pete went out there [indecipherable] ?

PS – It was. Uh huh. And then ... but it ... but then Pete carried ... Pete did a huge amount of work in this. He worked a lot with Sue Mathews and sort of preparing the public for this. Yes.

NO – So Pete [indecipherable] had been the planner for the [indecipherable] ?

PS – He had been. And he had ... and he was a key to the implementation of that translocation, no question about it.

NO – Did you ... did you have anything to do with the River Management Plan for Togiak which [indecipherable] ?

PS – A little bit.

NO – [indecipherable]

PS – Yeah. A little bit. But I didn't have a lot to do with that. At ... by that time, probably a couple of years went as the Refuge Supervisor. And, by the way, then John Kurtz retired in that time period, and John ... and so then I became the Refuge Supervisor for all of the Alaska refuges -- including the North Slope and ...

NO – All 17 refuges.

PS – All 17 refuges came under one Refuge Supervisor at that time. Then, eventually I became the ... answer your question, I didn't work a lot on the River Management Plan, but

a little bit. Became then the Deputy Assistant Regional Director when Joe Mazzoni left. And I think he went from there to Albuquerque as the Assistant Regional Director there.

NO – Right.

PS – So I worked as John Roger's deputy or assistant for a couple of years, in the late 80s /early 90s. And then ... and then John retired -- and we had a wonderful send off for John -- and ... and assumed the job of acting for him -- for almost a year as ... when ... after John left, and before Rown Gould was selected as the ARD for Refuges and Wildlife.

NO – If I remember correctly to thinking back to that time, the division between the ... the Deputy Regional Manager or the ... the Deputy ...

PS – Assistant.

NO – ... Regional Director ...

PS – Ok, then. Uh huh.

NO – ... and ... and the Assistant Regional Manager that ... that John was the ... had pretty much focused on the ... on the Waterfowl Plan the ...

PS – The Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta ...

NO – Yeah, the Waterfowl Conservation Plan for the Delta.

PS – Yes.

NO – And the ... that the Deputy, Joe ...

PS – Right.

NO – ... and I would assume you ...

PS – Right.

NO – ... pretty much ran the refuge program?

PS – That's right. I think that's a fair statement. Yeah. John ... John really ... I mean, although I will say John gave over ... sort of overarching direction on how to deal with everything. But you ... the chief operating officer, I'll say, for the refuge system up there, was really in that Deputy position. 'Cause John really invested his heart and his soul in the reestablishment of those four depressed populations of geese.

NO – [indecipherable] of arctic nesting geese.

PS – And it's ... you know, it was the issue for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, or Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. And it became a model for how to work with the public in ... in wildlife restoration and ... and ... and in ... in almost a 'no win' situation, where the

public was ... you know, had historically used those animals for their subsistence lifestyle, yet not in a legal fashion. And ... and trying to get them to buy-in to ...

NO – It was a spring hunting issue.

PS – It was spring hunting. And it was not authorized under the migratory bird treaties with Canada or Mexico. And it was only later, when I moved to ... with that knowledge and understanding ... moved from Alaska to Washington, where I was determined to amend that treaty. And that's one of the proudest things of my career, at the moment, is that ... to having ... having been successful in amending the treaty that would give some management foundation and ... and ... and get buy-in from the locals, who now could legally use those birds, as they historically had, and to be a part of the management -- and frankly, the restoration. Now they have a reason to participate. They have a reason to ... to actually abide by regulations. But when the regulations don't have anything in it for them, there's nothing for them to ... to support. And ... and they were the people who had lived ... who lived and used some of the best waterfowl habitat, and controlled some of the best waterfowl habitat, in the world. And if we were going to have embrace as a part of the management, then we were never going to be successful. And John was trying and trying and trying, and certainly was successful in ... in getting that ... laying the groundwork for it. But, in the end, we had to amend that treaty -- or those two treaties -- in order to really put this on legal footing. So that people didn't feel like outlaws out there. And they, you know, no one wants to feel like they're breaking the law. No one wants to be, you know, an outlaw. I don't believe that many people ... certainly those people don't. And so they ... we need a ... we needed a regulatory system that would ... would embrace them, and we could work with them on it. And, fortunately, we have that now. But, John -- to answer your question, I got off on a different tangent -- but John, was instrumental in sort of laying the groundwork for that. And ... and understand -- understood - even though he was a white guy from the west ... I mean the east ... as well, you know, and a biologist and all that. He was a very patient man. And ... and a dear, dear, dear man and friend, who ... who had the patience to work with the Natives and realize that this was a long term thing. And it wasn't like me -- this young whippersnapper -- wanted to see results in a day. John realized that the investment that he put in it would pay off -- but it wouldn't pay off in ... in ... in, you know, increments of a year. It would pay off in increments of decades. And ... but that's ... we ... we were in this for the long haul. And ... and we should be in it for the long haul. And I learned a lot from ... from that man.

NO – Yeah. I had a chance to go out to the Yukon Delta, while I was working on the CCP, for some of these meetings with John. And talking about elders in the villages, and the importance of elders in the villages, and I always felt that the ... the communities -- the Yupik communities, and the elders in the community -- had something very close ... they were kin ... felt akin, I think, to John Rogers, because he was an older ... older man, and had a head of white hair. And I thought they ... they probably worked quite well together, you know, as opposed to young biologists coming in and trying to sit down and talk to them.

PS – No question. I could have said the same things that John said, and not gotten near the respect and ... and been embraced like he was. And he was ... but he, of course, said it a lot better than I ever could. And he had worked with those people in ... in a very collegial and cooperative fashion. And he had the patience that they truly loved.

NO – Patience, I think, is the key, because things move very slowly. Meetings move very slowly. And you had to be very patient, really, to sort of get to where you wanted to go.

PS – Yeah.

NO – So, he was ... he was very good at that.

PS – He was the right person at the right time.

NO – Oh, absolutely. There's no question.

PS – There's no question. And ... and the, you know, the Joe Mazzoni's and the Paul Schmidt's and the, you know, you name us -- the rest of us up there who ... who were always, you know eager, had the same maybe -- vision, but didn't have the same ... the same skill set that John had. We ... we would get impatient too quickly, too easily. And we were definitely these guys who were just, you know, ready to get ... and if we didn't get results, you know, we'd demand it. You know -- that kind of thing. Well, that's not the way to do it. John taught us all a lot ... a big lesson in that. And ... and, you're right, his age helped. But his ... his ... his whole personality ... and his, you know, he earned it. He earned the respect. Not only from his white hair, but from his ... his character. And I'll always ... I'll always treasure and keep that ... keep that dear.

NO – Yeah. How did ... oh, actually, there's one more thing I wanted to ask you about -- 19-- 1989 -- Exxon Valdez ...

PS – Haaa!

NO – ... oil spill, did you have any involvement at all with that?

PS – Yes. One March morning, 1989, I'm driving up ... up the ... up the new Seward Highway. I can remember, I mean, it's ... it's just like -- vivid. And I had the radio on. It was ... I'm sure it was about 7 o'clock; I was going to work. And I heard this radio report of ... of the grounding and the spilling of oil -- the grounding of the Exxon Valdez tanker, and then the spilling of thousands of gallons of oil. And daylight was just beginning to come, and so there wasn't ... the radio clearly had an ominous report to it, but it wasn't yet ... had not come to light how big this was, by that moment. But I knew, in my heart, and through my ears, and this ... hearing this report, that our lives were going to change that morning. So I got into the office and the word was beginning to spread around the office and -- quickly -- and quickly up to the Regional Directors Office. And I can remember, John Nelson ... John Nelson, who was the ... at that time, we probably called it Ecological Services -- Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services -- and they ... they had the contaminates program. And spills would be, technically, under their ... their jurisdiction, if you will. And he ... he was very excited -- I mean it in a negative way. I don't mean, you know - happy excitement. He was like anxious about this report and what this meant to us. And we began to scramble in the office and try to figure out how we would respond to something that was as ... as minutes or hours went on, how it would be, sort of overwhelming, to respond to. And it's not, you know, it's not our job to be responding to oil spills. It's Coast Guard, and it's ... and it's ... and it's the company who's responsible. Another thing, I mean, we don't have the facilities to actually respond to the spillage, if you will. But then we have the wildlife to worry about, and all that. And that is a

bit of our responsibility. But ... so how are we gonna ... well, long story short is - it did change a lot of people's lives that day. And I'm sure the company of Exxon, and I'm sure, you know, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and I'm sure many, many publics who were affected by ... fishermen and others. But it affect... it certainly affected the Fish & Wildlife Service. And, yes, I did ... I was called upon, because, at that point, I was the ... I think I'd just become the Deputy Assistant to Regional Director and ... and migratory birds was under my ... under that program. And that was, obviously, one resource that was going to be impacted. Refuges ... the refuge properties, were going to be affected. But migratory birds, you know, are going to die.

NO – Certainly. Oh, yeah.

PS – They're gonna die, as a result of this spill. And it's in a, you know, treasured place -- on the Prince William Sound ... sea birds ... you know, treasure for sea birds in ... in that area. So, we began to layout a plan that had ... and over the next three months I worked on that -- on the Exxon Valdez -- one way, shape, or form, almost full time. And began ... we set up operations in Valdez, and as well as in the Seward ... we had an operations office. And Mike Hedrick helped us I think, in Seward. I mean, we began to ... me ... we began to pick people out of their normal jobs across the state, and that was basically my job with ... with consultation with other people, is -- who should we get to, you know, set up offices, heretofore, that we had ... had to respond to this. And, so, we sent key people down to Valdez, and Seward, and Kodiak, and I don't know, one other place, but they ... operational areas. I can remember there was this time when fax machines were just coming on to the scene -- 1989. I mean, it's funny to think of it that way now. And so, gosh, we now had fax mach... we could ... we could communicate -- other than by the phone of course -- now by passing these pieces of paper through these phone lines. It was kind of, you know, a big ... a big deal. And so we bought fax machines for all these offices, and we thought that was a huge deal. These offices we were trying to set up, and bring people down, and sort of an incident command centers; while Coast Guard, and Exxon, and the state of Alaska, were busy trying to actually respond to the oil that was spilled there. And then ... and one of the memories I have of that ... that ... that, you know, Valdez, if you've ever been to the end of the pipeline there -- it's not -- much. I mean, there's some big facilities there for storing oil, and big tankers, yeah, come into there, but the town of Valdez ...

NO – It's a small town.

PS – ... it's a little town, you know, it's not much to it. And I'd been there once or twice before, I think more ... more on my own, two fishing expeditions I went to Valdez. And I ... it was amazing ... I ... it was the day or two after the spill, and I flew ... was flown there by one of our refuge pilots -- I can't remember who was the pilot - and so we flew from Anchorage to there, because I had to get there to work with Exxon to establish some bird treatment center. So, we wash birds, and treat birds, and hopefully save a few birds in the end. But the memory is of flying in to this sleepy little town -- that had now become a metropolis of activity. I mean, it was this little, little airport that probably didn't see more than five take offs and landings in a day, was now seeing five take offs and landings in ... in ten minutes or less. They were lined up. And in fact, when we left about ... that day, I just flew for the day to kind of work for something, we were getting ready to leave that afternoon and we had to get in line for take off. There were helicopters. There were jets. There were planes. There were ... everywhere on this little, sleepy little, town, and we were lined up. And I think we were forth or fifth in line for take off. And it would never ever, ever have been like that.

NO – No.

PS – Except for those ... that time. It just became like its own little city of ... of activity and [indecipherable]. Everybody was, you know, had all their opinions and all their fears about of ... of such a big oil spill, in such a critical area. But ... it was an emotional time for lots of people. And it ... it was for me. And it'll probably, you know, go down as the ... for two reasons it'll go down as the ... the worst three months of my life: one is trying to deal with a disaster like that -- peoples lives being affected, wildlife dying, and a those ... just a bad thing; combined with the ... my mother had just been diagnosed with cancer. So, it was really ... it was a really tough time.

NO – Yeah. I'll bet. I'll bet. I wound up spending 30 days in July as a service monitor on ... site monitor in Mourning Cove in the Pie Islands, working out of Seward, working with Ann Rappaport and ...

PS – Was Mike Hedrick there? Wasn't he?

NO – No Mike ... it wasn't Mike. It was Tom Early. Tom Early was there.

PS – Oh, yeah. Of course. It was. Yeah

NO – So I lived out in ... out in a fishing boat ...

[competing / overlapping voices / indecipherable]

PS – Oh, my gosh. I'll bet that was ...

[competing / overlapping voices / indecipherable]

NO – ... out on ... It was an interesting experience.

PS – Yeah.

NO – It was a mess -- a horrible mess, but it was an incredible experience.

PS – How long were you down there?

NO – Thirty days. I was there for two weeks, had a week off, and someone from the Denver office came up and replaced me -- fellow named John ... I can't remember his last name ... and then I came back for another two weeks.

PS – Another two weeks after that.

NO – Yeah.

PS – Well, everybody was called to action. I mean, everybody ...

NO – Oh, yes.

PS – ... was affected in the Service -- at least in Alaska, and other places as well, because we didn't have the resources ...

NO – Yeah.

PS – ... and the people to do this [indecipherable].

NO – It surprised me, as I volunteered to do it and I figured 'I'm not a biologist, they'll never select me, you know, to go.'

PS – Yeah.

NO – But I got to go. You ... you needed people, so ...

PS – We needed people – bad. And people would do it. Yeah. [schew – sound effect]

[overlapping voices]

PS – ... you know, stop their job and give up whatever they were doing there, and do this.

NO – It's one of the things like Kennedy's assassination I guess, you'll always remember where you were. 'Cause I was down at Kenai that morning. And I can remember, we were talking ... I was out at the maintenance shed talking to Jim **Fradies**, the Jim **Fradies** that left the regional office and had gone back down there as ...

PS – He was ...

NO – ... the Chief of Maintenance.

PS – Chief of Maintenance. Yeah. Chief of their operations.

NO – Talking to him, and all of a sudden - the radio was on - and came the announcement that the ... this boat was hung up on the rock up there.

PS – Oh, my gosh. It is just like that. It is just like Kennedy ... I mean, everybody remembers, you know, where ... I was in a classroom, I can remember, whatever grade I was, and when we got the news of ... of JFK's assassination. And I can remember -- almost within, you know, 100 yards of where I was on the ...

NO – On the Seward highway.

PS – ... on the Seward highway -- when it ... the radio, you know, the ... the ... I was just listening to the radio and this news thing came on. That is funny. I'll bet you ... you could ask that of ...

NO – Lots of people that were in Alaska.

PS – Hundreds of people, at the time, and they'd all have ... be able to remember where there were.

NO – Remember where they were, for sure. Did you ... along the vein of oil, did you ever get a chance to get up to the North Slope?

PS – I did.

NO – And Prudhoe Bay?

PS – What an interesting place. Yeah. Well, only went up there after I became the Refuge Supervisor for ... that included that.

NO – The whole state.

PS – The whole state. And I went to Prudhoe Bay one time as a part of ... Artic Refuge, of course, was there, and long debate about whether to drill or not drill in the Artic. And still, to this day, what -- 20 some years later -- we're still debating that one. So, the idea was that I ... I ... I think I was going to Barrow, and I can't remember all that we were doing there, but I went, and I can remember going to Prudhoe Bay for my first time. And it was like a way eye opening thing. I can remember the ... the facilities had just seemed to go on forever. And ... and you almost never had to go outside, you just go from one little, you know, these tunnels ... and the ... They had great food. I do remember that -- it was great food.

NO – That was the BP Hilton, or something like that, it was called?

PS – Yes. And the oil ...

NO – It was quite a facility.

PS – The people who worked there would go up there for ... usually ...

NO – Thirty ...

PS – ... two weeks on, wasn't it?

NO – Well, it was two weeks or thirty days.

PS – It could be.

NO – Something like that.

PS – I think maybe two weeks ...

NO – Two weeks on, thirty days off.

PS – Yeah.

NO – Thirty days off.

PS – Some of them would live in lower 48, stuff like that, and they could live in Seattle and just take a plane up there ever so often, you know, for their two weeks of work. And then go back home for two weeks and ... off. And then there were many people in Anchorage, of course, who did ... did that.

NO – And Kenai as well.

PS – Kenai.

NO – And Soldotna.

PS – Yeah, who just fly up for their work on the oil patch and then ... and ... and come back. Yeah. It was a fascinating ... no place else like it in ... well, I suppose there is, but [I'd never] seen any thing like it before in my life.

NO – Thing is, I had a chance while I was working on the Artic Plan, to ... to drive ... we drove a ... a suburban ... a Service suburban from Fairbanks, up the Haul Road to ...

PS – Oh, my goodness.

NO – Dead Horse, and left it there for a crew that was working ... that was going to be driving back down. So we flew back. We got to tour the ... the ... the BP Hilton, and we got to spend the night at Dead Horse in the ... the Lodge there, and all that sort of stuff. And I remember getting on the plane -- Alaska Airlines plane leaving ... leaving Dead Horse -- and the first thing they did was gave everyone two free drinks. 'Cause you couldn't drink when you were working up there.

PS – Right. So you got it ...

NO – So we just happened to be ... happy to be, you know, there at the right time, and we got two free drinks. But, it was standard operating procedure.

PS – Part of the planes ...

NO – Soon as the planes took off,

PS – You could ...

NO – ... they gave everyone on the plane two free drinks.

PS – Oh, my gosh. I can remember those ... Yeah, I do remember those days, when the alcohol flowed on planes a lot more than they do these days. That's funny.

NO – Yeah. That was an interesting thing to see, and experience.

PS – It was. It was. And I ... I ... I never really got much involved in the ... in the actual ... the debate about whether to open the Arctic to oil drilling or not. It was just way over my grade level. It was, you know, all the way to the White House and the Congress and everybody else goes ‘don’t worry about that.’ I just figured what ... what will be, will be. I’m ... lil’ Paul isn’t going to have any influence on that.

NO – Oh, yeah. Yeah.

PS – Let’s invest my time in caribou transplantation or, you know, the things like that.

NO – You talked a little bit about it but how ... how did your life and your job change when you actually became a member of the Directorate? You know, you went from being the Refuge Supervisor to being the Deputy. Things change? You get out to the field as often or ...?

PS – No, of course, I did not. That’s correct. I think the Refuge Supervisor was probably ... if I look back on my, almost 30 year career now, that [was] probably my best ... my most favorite job, because of the experience of ... some of which I’ve related to you. But, you could see, and get to the field. And you could see results of things that you ... and you could have an impact on a ... sort of a broad scale. But you’d also see the actual results materialize, and getting to get out in the field and see ... just, you know ... you know, it ... I mean, the best places in the world -- many of them -- are in Alaska. And, so that was ... that was a special couple of / three years in ... in that job. And I ... I ... I’m looking back on it right now and ... and saying that was the best job I ever had. And probably ever will have in the Fish & Wildlife Service. Because then I did become part of the Directorate and ... and didn’t stay in close enough contact with the field after that, and there was more administration and, you know, more supervision, and things like that that ... that would take your time up. None of which are particularly enjoyable, but part of the ... part of the job. So, that did change.

NO – So what were ... while you were a member of the Directorate, there in Alaska, was, perhaps, the Exxon Valdez the ... **The** ... the **Big Event** ...

PS – I think that was The Big Event.

NO – ... of the period?

PS – Yeah. That was a big ... I mean, a world wide event, in a sense. I mean, it was ... touched ... touched people who, you know ... lower 48 were crying because of, you know, what this had done ... and had never seen Prince William Sound, you know. So it did ... it was a huge event. Huge event.

NO – Oh, the coverage, you know, it was on television every night, and on the front page of the paper ...

PS – Front page.

NO – ... every day.

PS – New York Times, you know, every ... every paper and ... and, you know, every magazine, you know, Time magazine, Newsweek, and all would cover all the happenings associated with that. I learned a couple of things about that that I'll tell you is that, you know, we used to think of federal government as being this horrible bureaucracy. Well, I'm here to tell you, Exxon Corporation is the most bureaucratic institution I've ever dealt with, by far. We would ... we got ... tried to get them to make decisions during that couple of months time period, seemed like nobody had the authority to make any decisions, they had to ask ten more layers up the line before they could get ... little actions that we wanted to get done. Very frustrating. So, I never really took criticism about federal bureaucracy too well after that, when I saw that, yeah, you know, big companies have their own bureaucracy and just as frustrating, and ... and just as immovable, in some regards, as ... as federal government. I think it's just the size of ... when you organize people in those kinds of ... that big you ... you're going to have – inertia to get over, and that's ... that's just part of it. That was probably the biggest collective, and I think the biggest, you know, a couple of other little -- not little events – but, memorable events, were when we lost humans.

NO – Well, yes. Yeah.

PS – We lost ... we lost Rich Barcelona.

NO – You remember ... you mentioned Rich. Yeah. Yeah.

PS – In ... when he was doing a waterfowl survey in ... in ... in the Yukon Flats, I think.

NO – Um hum.

PS – And, you know, very capable young ...

NO – [indecipherable] lake, I think.

PS – ... very capable young biologist ... everybody loved. And drowned as a part of a ... an exercise in a ... in ... in ... we learned from there that we needed to do better training of people before they were put out onto boats by themselves and ... or even with people. We just ... it ... we learned that ... that it's dangerous everywhere, I guess, but you ... and you make a mistake in Alaska and you ... you can lose your life. And we need to prepare people for that. And our people are our best and most cherished resource. And Rich was one of those. And when we lost him that ... that told us we weren't doing things right. So we developed a whole training program after that. And ... we lost a couple of people out on ... on the Aleutian Islands. It was a very sad event as well. We lost the Student Conservation Association student and a refuge employee as a part of a capsizing of a boat on the Aleutians while I was there. We had ... one of my duties, at that time, was to ... to give that bad news to ... to the families. Those are sad times. Memorable in ... in their own ways. And ... and of course it was ... it was ... a decision was made up there in the, you know, like trying to get from here to there, and the weather came up on them and ... and they weren't capable ... weren't able to handle the bad weather that was between them and where they were headed. And ... and four people were on the boat. Two were lost. And two survived. And then there was one other experience. And again -- these are all sort of sad moments, but I'll get them all out at once -- is that a ... had a maintenance worked on

the Alaska at [indecipherable] King Salmon, Alaska, Becharof, who ... who committed suicide while he was out there. And ...

NO – Ron Hood. [See pg. 6]

PS – Ron Hood was the Refuge Manager. Thank you, Norm.

NO – I remembered him. Yes.

PS – Golly day. I would have ... I'm so thankful that you remembered his name. He was the Refuge Supervisor, and the maintenance worker had gone out behind his house and ... and killed himself.

NO – I remember that.

PS – And ... I can remember Walt Stieglitz when we got ... I got the word and I went to ... told Walt and, you know, reported it through the system to the Director and all that, and Walt said 'well, you've got to go tell the next of kin.' And that was before I had to do it for the ... for the kids, and this was to be the first time I had to do it. And, boy, you don't get that kind of training anywhere. But it turns out he had a ... his next of kin was his sister, who lived in Anchorage, so I [indecipherable] got my wits about me a little bit, and went and talked to ... I can remember talked to Sue Mathews a little bit. Because I felt she was always a very personable person, and a good relate, she was very sensitive kind of a person. And I wanted some advice. How do I approach this woman and tell her, you know, knock on a strangers door and say, you know, your ... your brothers, you know, just committed suicide? So she helped me through that, kind of planning out the event. And ... and then ... then I went. And I asked her to go with me, because I didn't know how to ... to approach it. But, went into this lady's ... knocked on the door, introduced myself, went into her ... into her house, into her living room, and ... and proceeded to tell her that ... that her ... her brother had just died. And we worked through that, but it was ... that was an emotional experience, for sure.

NO – Oh, I'll bet. Yeah. That'd have to be.

PS – Face somebody like that. I'd never had to do that before them [indecipherable] They didn't train me for that, Norm. They didn't train me for that one.

NO – Lots of firsts then. And you know ... and just being in Alaska. I know it's the only place I've ever lived in my life where I've known people who were ... who died violent deaths, you know.

PS – Yeah.

NO – Who either committed suicide, or I ... a spouse shot them, or some thing like that. It's the only place I've ever lived where I've been that close to something like that. So, ...

PS – It's a very ... it's almost too ... it's a way too common occurrence up there.

NO – Oh, up there it really is. Yeah. Especially in the villages, with the alcohol problem.

PS – Yeah.

NO – But you mentioned training ...

PS – Yes.

NO – ... a little while ago. I was thinking, I went to Alaska and I remember we were supposed to take training -- cold weather training -- at Fort Richardson or something.

PS – Oh, yeah.

NO – I never got to do that.

PS – I didn't either.

NO – You were also supposed to take training if you flew in small airplanes.

PS – Yes.

NO – And I never got to take that training.

PS – Oooh ...

NO – So, I never did any of those things. But flew thousands of miles up there. And it wasn't 'till I came back here in ... probably '93, when I was working on the ... on the Conte ... Silvio O. Conte Refuge project, on the Connecticut River, we had had a Service pilot that was gonna fly the River. And our biologist was gonna go with. And I asked if I could go with too. And they asked if I had the training. And I hadn't had the training so I couldn't go.

PS – Good for him.

NO – Yeah.

PS – That's a great ... that ... and we shoulda had ... got the training for you and that's ...

NO – Oh, yeah. That's stuff, I think back to it ... I mean, being out there on two week river trips, and all the stuff that we did, and took ... the winter travel we did, and the ... I mean, I ... I ... I've been an outdoors person all my life, I could probably figure out most of it -- except flying an airplane ...

PS – Yeah.

NO – Couldn't figure that one out. But ... but thinking about that, you know, we were kinda lax on stuff like that.

PS – We were.

NO – That's ... which we shouldn't be. I hope today, you know, that that's not the case, that people do get that training.

PS – I ... I ... I hope they do too, Norm. And I, you know, I ... this is such ... it reminds [indecipherable] of Rich Barcelona. You know the old expression is really, really true. It is that, you know, every, you know, safety regulation or training is written in somebody's blood.

NO – That's right.

PS – And it's true. So we didn't know ... we didn't train people, before Rich died, in handling boats, and, you know, all what you need to do up there to ... to be safe.

NO – Um hum.

PS – And ... and so then ... then we ... we planned out a whole training program. If you're gonna be in a boat in Alaska -- you're gonna have boat safety training. Period. You know, that's just it. But ... but you're right, we're a little lax, and we certainly were at that time.

NO – Yeah. Well, in 1991, you wound up going back to DC. What was your job when you went back?

PS – Yeah. In fact ...

NO – You stayed in refuges, I think, for a while, didn't you?

PS – No. I ... I took a little side trip, actually. But brief ... only ... fairly brief in nature. It's actually in ... in 1992, I got a call from Dick Smith. I had been in [indecipherable] as the acting Assistant Regional Director when John P. retired ...

NO – Um hum.

PS – ... and Dick Smith called me. And he said 'I'd like you to come in here.' And if you knew Dick Smith, it was a lot of this rough conversation ...

NO – Oh, yes.

PS – ... you know. Dick Smith – 'Paul, I want you in here. Talk to you.' 'Ok, when Dick?' He'd say 'well, I want you to fly in here tomorrow.' 'Ahh, ok.' So I flew from Alaska ... I got an earl... I flew on a red eye.

NO – Um hum.

PS – ‘Cause he wanted to see me first thing, he ...

NO – ... in the morning.

PS – wanted to see me in the morning. And I didn't know what it was about.

End Tape 1 Side 2